Hi, my name is Debra Ellers, and I’m a member of Great Old Broads for Wilderness. I’m asking that President Biden agree to breach the 4 Lower Snake River Dams in Eastern Washington, and restore the lower Snake River, as part of the settlement to resolve the 3 decades long lawsuit over ESA listed Columbia/Snake salmon and steelhead.

Doing so will further important goals of his administration, to follow science, save lands and biodiversity, combat climate change and honor tribal rights.

I currently live in Port Townsend, WA on the Olympic Peninsula, where we’ve seen the roaring success of the 2 Elwha Dam removals.

The Elwha is now providing more chinook salmon as food for our critically endangered Southern Resident Orcas, but it’s not nearly enough.

We need big numbers of wild salmon coming back from the Columbia / Snake rivers to get the more than half million chinook yearly our orcas need to thrive.

Before moving to the Olympic Peninsula, I lived in Idaho for 30 years, so saw first hand the severe decline in salmon there. I’ve spent much time in the pristine salmon habitat above the 4 Lower Snake River Dams. That 5500 miles of cold clear mountain rivers and streams is the best salmon habitat left in the lower 48. The stagnant reservoirs from these Dams severely impair salmon migration to and from these crucial spawning grounds.

The best available science, such as NOAA’s recent Final Report, is that breaching the 4 Lower Snake River Dams is essential to restore Columbia/Snake salmon and steelhead, as well as our critically-endangered Southern Resident Orcas.

Besides saving endangered fish, restoring the lower Snake River will bring back many other species, such as beavers, frogs, insects, bats and birds, which used to be plentiful along the lower Snake before damming.

Restoring native vegetation and wildlife along the 140 mile lower Snake corridor will revive more than 14,000 acres of productive riparian wetlands and grasslands already in federal ownership.

This major restoration will be a big boost to the Biden Administration's conservation goal of 30x30: 30% protected areas by 2030. This 140 mile restored riparian corridor will also provide key connectivity for wildlife.

Breaching the dams, and restoring the free-flowing lower Snake, will help fight climate change in several important ways:

* Reducing significant methane emissions from the hot stagnant reservoirs behind the 4 dams. Recent scientific research has shown that algal growth in these reservoirs emits voluminous methane, a potent greenhouse gas.

* It will also sequester more carbon in the native vegetation along the restored riparian lands of the lower Snake than the current barren banks and dead reservoirs do.
* It will also sequester much more carbon in the inland forests of the Snake watershed, as more salmon bring their marine derived nutrients to the upland spawning grounds.

Finally, restoring the lower Snake will honor tribal rights, a long overdue trust obligation of the US gov. Regional tribes will have more salmon for their exercise of fishing rights, and regain access and management for U&A hunting, gathering and cultural sites along the lower Snake .

In conclusion, I ask that Pres. Biden leave a lasting legacy for our region’s future, and agree to breach these dams as part of this settlement. He will show true leadership by this critically needed action. Thank you.

We don’t need the small amount of energy or taxpayer subsidized navigation that the LSRDs provide.

* First, the energy from the 4 Lower Snake River Dams is a small part of the Northwest’s overall supply, about 4%, and best at producing power when not needed (spring runoff, when NW energy demands are lowest).
* Barging of commodities like wheat on the lower Snake is declining, and requires substantial taxpayer subsidies. Rail and truck offer more flexible options with more public benefits. The locks are complex and aging, and will require even more taxpayer spending to support.
* Wheat farmers on the Palouse got their products to market for nearly a hundred years before these dams were built. They will still have ways to get products to market after the dams are breached. Currently, navigation benefits only special interests who stand to profit from taxpayer subsidies for their businesses.